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ABSTRACT

This paper uses a chronological approach in examining the historic and current roles of public education as they relate to majority group education and the education of blacks. A survey of historical and educational literature points out conflicting conceptions of education and crosscurrents in educational thought with respect both to Federal policy-making and programs, and to public attitudes along these dimensions. Differences and changes in educational policy regarding majority and black education are described and traced through the 18th and 19th centuries. References are made to the prevailing educational policy of exclusion for blacks until the end of the Civil War and to the divisiveness public education created between immigrants and their children. Court decisions which influenced changes in educational policy are cited. It is argued that public schools in general, and programs and other public efforts to assist blacks in particular, are still under attack from significant portions of the American public. (Author/EB)

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HISTORIC ROLES OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

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HISTORIC ROLES OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

This paper will use a timeline approach to look at the topic from two dimensions -- (1) historic and current roles of public education in general, i.e., in terms of issues, policies and programs related to the majority group, as well as public attitudes toward those roles, and (2) historic and current roles of public education for Blacks, and public attitudes toward those roles. In both of these dimensions a survey of the historical and educational literature reveals conflicting conceptions of education and crosscurrents in educational thought with respect to policy-making, programs, and with respect to public attitudes about education.

Let's begin with a definition of education, and a look at what it is generally expected to accomplish. Education is both process and product. As process it is devoted to mental and moral development via instruction; as product it is the knowledge and development resulting from the instructional process, which we usually think of as the formal process undergone via schooling -- but which we know includes informal and nonformal processes, both in and out of school. Thus education bears the formal institutionalized responsibility for instruction (pedagogy), and it bears an equally

awesome responsibility for socialization -- transmitting the culture from one generation to the next.

Public education refers to schools set up by governmental authority, subject to regulation, control, and inspection by government at all levels. They are funded by government via public monies secured through taxation, and are designed to serve public purposes -- the common good, the public interest. As a nation we have believed so strongly in the worth of public education (or at minimum its utility) that we have compelled children to attend school, forced their parents to send them to school, and forced communities to maintain schools. Thus we commonly equate public education with public schooling, even though we know they are not precisely synonymous. Education is broader, deeper, longer and larger than schooling for education develops relationships, stimulates applications, uncovers meanings, and unearths new knowledge which schooling does not necessarily provide.

Most Americans today receive all, or some significant part, of their schooling (especially at the elementary and secondary levels) in public schools. There are, of course, parochial and private schools which parents are free to select in lieu of having their offspring attend public schools. But most Americans, for reasons of economy, convenience, ideology (philosophy), and/or custom have in

the past sent their offspring to public schools, and a majority still do so today.

Education does not exist in a vacuum. It is always a function of time, place, circumstances. Thus to examine education and public schools at any period one must always examine the society and its prevailing conditions. Disagreements and divisiveness in education often stem from, and reflect, more basic economic, social, and political differences in society. Neither the education establishment nor the public is monolithic. Keeping all this in mind, let us turn from definitions to the timeline approach, and examine in a survey way the historic roles of public education.[1]

As one surveys the literature for evidence on the role of education in American history, for the majority group, a clear split is immediately evident between the work of traditional educational historians and that of newer "revisionists." The long-standing work of such authorities as R. Freeman Butts, Lawrence A. Cremin, Merle Curti, Henry Steele Commager, Richard Hofstadter, and others[2] has been challenged by emerging authorities such as Clarence J. Karier, Paul Violas, Joel Spring, Michael B. Katz, and Colin Greer, whose books began to be published in the late 1960s.[3]

The former group of educational historians, Butts et al., generally write in the vein which portrays American

society as democratic and good possessing weaknesses which are ever-worked on by concerned groups and individuals, striving for perfectibility, and making progress (albeit uneven) toward that end. Within this vein the role of the school is to contribute toward the gradual perfection of American society and the American people. These authorities show how the battle for public schooling has been long, and hard-fought; slowly and unevenly, but steadily American schools have moved toward more democracy and now aim to educate all the children of all the people at public expense to at least age 16 or 17. They emphasize that the concept of universal education has won out over the notion that education should be restricted to an elite, that the concept of equal educational opportunity has prevailed over the notion of exclusion of minorities, and over that of "separate-but-equal". Tax support for schools has increased, (even though within-and between-state inequities exist) the curriculum has been enlarged and made more flexible to meet varied needs and interests of diverse constituencies who now need to learn and re-learn all their lives, teachers are more qualified than ever before, more specialized support-service professionals are employed, as are community people in "aiding" roles. Federal support for education, with minimal controls, is described and encouraged as legitimate to assist hard-pressed states and local communities who are striving

to meet continuing educational needs of the under-served constituencies, especially Blacks, and other minorities of color in urban areas, as well as the handicapped. In general they write the "history of education as a form of social action."[4] They defend "the system," while acknowledging its more obvious shortcomings, including those in education.

The latter group of educational historians, Karier et al., also write the "history of education as a form of social action."[5] But they attack the system (society) based on the illusions it has created, its false piety, the myth of merit, and the extent to which it has failed to live up to its expressed ideals. They find American society to be racist, class-oriented, conservative, materialistic, bureaucratic. Within this vein they explain that the role of the school has been one of protecting vested interests. Education has been a systematic form of social control, repressive and oppressive. David Tyack says, for example, "the public schools have rarely taught the children of the poor effectively--and this failure has been systematic, not idiosyncratic."[6] Collectively these authorities effectively call our attention to the discriminatory treatment of minority groups and women, the mistreatment of ethnic groups and immigrants, the direct connections between education and social stratification as well as those between schools and

politics. They have "demythologized the history of American education, stripped away false assumptions, and pointed out the inadequacies of the historical record."[7]

Which interpretation is better, more accurate? There is no scientific way to know. However, if we focus on societal and educational intent as we sift through the evidence provided by authorities, we find ourselves in a position somewhat like that of the proverbial "chicken and egg" controversy. (We cannot in truth say either interpretation misrepresents facts, instead we must acknowledge different interpretations of facts.) What was society's intent for itself? What was its intent for education and schools? What did the schools themselves intend to do -- what roles did they perceive to be theirs legitimately? The opposite questions also apply here -- what was it that society did not intend to do? What did society intend that schools not do? What did the schools themselves not intend to do? And in a different vein -- what were the unintended consequences of public schooling?

These hard questions become part of the ongoing dialogue and debate among authorities and citizens. It will be more productive here for us to focus on effect. Let's assume that American society intended to preserve and sustain itself as it grew and developed, changed from rural to urban, changed from agricultural-to industrial-to post-

industrial, excluded and admitted large groups of people from other countries, moved from isolationism to participation in world affairs. Let's assume also that America would accept, willingly or unwillingly, change within society, but would resist change of society. Within this framework, then, what was the effect of having public schools and schooling as compared with not having such schools and schooling for most individuals? I believe we will find that the effects of public schooling have exceeded intent in this developing nation.

In the colonial period, especially in New England, we find the roots of today's public schooling concepts. It was Massachusetts which passed laws in 1642 and 1647 to require children to attend school, to require towns to establish schools, and to maintain them at least in part by general taxation.[8] The general court of Connecticut followed Massachusetts' 1642 lead in 1650 by requiring that all boys be taught to read the scriptures. These laws established a precedent for the free school of the 19th century.[9] In this early period the role of the school was perceived to be an instrument for the preservation of religious faith, as well as an instrument for economic good. The clergy were the influential people of that period, and as part of the "public" they supported these laws. It was, of course, in their self-interest to do so since they wanted to expand

religiosity and socialize people into being temperate, and obedient. Master craftsmen and business owners, other influential public persons, supported these schooling laws for economic reasons. Anyone who could read and write was not likely to become a public charge, a pauper, and might well become a better worker.

Now we may argue, as would the revisionists, that the primary purpose of providing schooling was the welfare of the colonies, the clergy, and the craftsmen -- not the well-being of the children who were to be schooled. There is much truth in the argument since community influentials of the time wanted primarily religious, civic, and economic responsibility -- not refined, polite, educated children. But the effect of providing educational laws and schools went far beyond the limited intent of the providers; it was a two-edged sword. The effect was that children learned useful trades, which they could use immediately and/or which they could take with them as they grew up and moved elsewhere, taking advantage of opportunities provided by the expanding frontier. Most poor settlers were able to better themselves in one generation, an achievement which they could not have accomplished in Europe. The effect also was that the idea of collective responsibility for the education of the young was implanted in American society. That is, states and local districts have a responsibility to educate

the young; such responsibility is not totally that of individuals, their parents or guardians.

Moreover, by the beginning of the 18th century, new voices from the "public" could be heard, advocating expanded educational opportunity in terms of providing for individual talents and interests (the Quakers); education for politics, business, government, science (Benjamin Franklin); maintaining social control -- education is the best policeman (Daniel Webster); free elementary schools for all white children (male and female) for three years, with free education at advanced levels for the most talented boys from poor white families (Thomas Jefferson). Jefferson also recommended public support and control of education, thereby anticipating the course of educational reform in the 19th century.

By the end of the 18th century, the young country had gained its independence from England, and become far more secularized. The new federal system of government needed an "enlightened citizenry," the production of which was a role of the school. The role of the school also was to socialize children in patriotism and loyalty to the national state. These concepts were reinforced in the 1840s and 1850s as the great immigrations occurred. The role of the school was to inculcate patriotism, nationalism, and republicanism. This role endured, and was successfully executed by schools well

into the twentieth century, probably until the decade of the 1960s.

Free, public, common elementary schools were demanded by the public early in the 19th century, and were a reality by mid-century for whites, except in the south. The common man, the worker, felt that his children could rise to the top if they had schooling. Tax-paying businessmen were urged to support universal elementary education in order to "raise the productivity of the people and thereby increase national prosperity."[10] With increasing urbanization, industrialism, and immigration it was expected that universal elementary education would decrease crime, and prevent poverty. Philosophers argued that education was the natural right of individuals, and that there was a public duty to supply education for all children. Thus, by the middle of the 19th century, the role of the school became more critical to the importance of the society than in the earlier era. The role and responsibility of the school had become one of taking on societal tasks which could not be entrusted to chance, or left to haphazard fulfillment by family, church, or participation in the life of the community.

But not all portions of the public accepted the idea of universal elementary education. In rural areas generally and in the south particularly there was resistance, usually

based on a perception that this kind of education was not needed by the young in those areas. Other citizens argued that all education demanded leisure, and therefore was a legitimate goal only for the upper classes. Much of this opposition was to universal public education, not universal education per se. These opponents felt that everyone in a republic ought to be educated, but felt that only paupers should be schooled at public expense. Some felt that public-supported education transgressed on rights of private property; others felt that education was a religious function, not a public one. The Germans in Pennsylvania and Ohio feared that their children would lose both culture and their language in public schools.[11]

David B. Tyack sums up this early period in this way:

> During the colonial period, most schools had perpetuated differences of religion, occupation, national origin, and social class. During the early national period, despite the desire of the revolutionary educational reformers for a homogeneous citizenry, education continued to be heterogeneous, maintaining much of its sectarian energy and social diversity. . . .
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> . . . . . .
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> Still the institutions were a hodgepodge. . . Beginning in the 1820s a number of Americans began to wonder if American schools were good enough or systematic enough to carry the burden placed on them. Out of decades of criticism and reform -- the ferment called the common school crusade -- emerged a basic democratic institution. From the clash of new social conditions and old articles of faith, interpreted by eloquent and determined reformers, came the American common school. . . .

> The crusade began in the settled older regions of the East, where new social conditions -- urbanization, industrialism, immigration, and the democratization of politics -- were most visible and painful. These new forces unleashed social, political, and economic conflicts, and educational historians have traditionally seen the common school crusade as itself a series of "battles." It is true that many citizens did oppose the common school: taxpayers -- urban landlords and dirt farmers alike -- who could see no reason to educate the children of others; sectarian groups who attacked public schools as godless or covertly Protestant; patrons and proprietors of private schools; laborers who opposed education beyond the three R's as a subsidy of the wealthy; and patricians who clung to an elitism which was going out of style in Jacksonian America. But the remarkable characteristic of the common school crusade was its universality. All types of people -- merchant and union organizers, Whig and Democrat, Calvinist and Unitarian, easterner and westerner -- joined the cause, often with quite different motives (intents). The movement was more remarkable for the consensus it secured than for the conflict it aroused.
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> . . . . . .
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> The chief contribution of the common school reformers was to articulate and focus the generalized American belief in education and to make it relevant to the aspirations and anxieties of the age. In so doing, gradually, partly consciously, partly unintentionally, they gave form and content and purpose to the public school.[12]

Meanwhile, advocacy for free public secondary education had begun about 1820 in cities in New England, in the midwest, and in the south. Secondary education began as private enterprise, starting with Latin grammar schools. These existed as primarily college preparatory institutions for elite white males, and a few talented poor boys,

beginning in 1635. During the first half of the eighteenth century private "English" secondary schools emerged in response to growing commercial interests of the middle classes, to give practical vocational education in subjects needed for occupational success. Some of these subjects were: shipbuilding, mathematics, surveying, bookkeeping, accounting, letter writing, foreign languages, geography, English grammar. In the latter half of the eighteenth century these schools gradually gave way to academies, which sought to combine the classical values and content of the Latin grammar schools with the more vocational values and content of the "English" schools into one institution. Academies were private schools and some of them were boarding schools. They were of different types in terms of organization, funding, control, and student-body composition; some were also founded for girls. The academy dominated secondary education for most of the 19th century.[13]

In 1827 Massachusetts passed a law requiring towns with 500 or more families to maintain high schools. It was the only state to require towns to establish high schools for over half a century.[14] Many of the arguments for free public high schools paralleled those of free common universal elementary schooling, but added to those were: raising educational standards in the community, removing older children from the common schools and making space for younger ones,

keeping youngsters at home under parental influence rather than sending them away to boarding schools with their pernicious influences and temptations, and providing a reliable source of teachers for the lower common schools. But it was not until the 1880s that students enrolled in high schools began to outnumber those enrolled in academies.

Needless to say, there was much opposition to the idea of free secondary education, as well as to the idea of state-supported colleges or universities. Significant portions of the public felt that high school and college education extended to the lower classes would create malcontents. It was also felt that such people would be unwilling to do manual labor or farm labor, so the productive capacity of large numbers of people would be hindered. Likewise the leisure argument was utilized, along with charges of communism, socialism and atheism. Moreover, it was argued that while all would be taxed to support high schools and colleges, only a few would benefit from their services. Also, it was argued that much-needed funds would be diverted from elementary schools for these higher schools. But public support of high schools was legalized via the Kalamazoo decision of the Michigan Supreme Court in 1874, and the Richards v. Raymond decision in Illinois in 1878.[15]

Thus it is important to pause here and acknowledge that the legal basis for support of public high schools is

only about 100 years old, and in fact it was not until the turn of the 20th century that the avalanche of high schools developed for white youth. Thus this nation has had a well developed high-school system for white youtn only since about the end of World War I (1918), less than 100 years. The idea of public high schools was primarily urban-centered, and a legitimate function of high schools was judged to be the resolution of conflicting values in the society.

Richard Pratte sums up the <u>effect</u> of the public school movement through the end of the 19th century as follows:[16]

> (1) . . . The revolutionary effects of the shift from an unsystematic pattern of schools to a full-scale bureaucratization of schools represents a major ideological commitment. . . The public school movement took on the form of formal compulsory instruction publicly sponsored, and adopted the prevailing corporate-bureaucratic structure dominant in the society at large, and came to be administered along production lines, guided by the cult of efficiency.
>
> (2) The belief prevailed that a reallocation of the country's investment leading to more schools and longer schooling would eventually yield a return on investment from greater increases in the gross national produce. . . . . Increased expenditures for public schooling would be followed by a general upgrading of the labor force, a marked increase in earning power, and by rising levels of economic growth.
>
> (3) General acceptance that
>
> A. Schooling is no longer a privilege, but a universal necessity, good for both the individual and the larger society.
>
> B. It is part of the role of the school to group, sort, and screen students according to ability and responsibility.

C. Education is formal schooling, and schools are the major educative force in society. Thus they may operate as a public monopoly, modeled after the organizational structure and utilitarian values of corporate business.

D. The teaching/learning environment of the school is not necessarily connected to the community at large. It may be, but not necessarily, for schooling given may not have caught up with segments of a rapidly changing industrial society, or conversely, it may be aimed at leading the community to effect broad changes.

In the twentieth century through the 1920s a major role of the public school was to provide children and youth with the skills, techniques and knowledge necessary for success in life (as success is customarily defined) in corporate, urban America. The role of the school became, more clearly than ever, that of a transitional preparatory institution in which the young were separated from family and its socialization patterns and prepared to join the increasingly complex economic and political order. Only a small proportion of high school graduates went on to college, or was expected to do so.

Also at this time, from around the turn of the century through the 1920s, public schools were charged with the responsibility of educating "new immigrants" from southern and eastern Europe and their offspring. These people were classified by leading anthropologists and sociologists as inferior to Nordic or Teuton types, although all parties

under discussion were white. Such respected educational authorities as Ellwood Cubberley described the coming of the immigrants as a corruption to national life and he feared a dilution of our national stock as a result of their presence. Congress accepted testimony as to the inferiority and illiteracy of white Europeans, including Jewish persons, and was so influenced by what if heard that it passed two very restrictive immigration bills in 1921 and 1924. "National origins" were to remain a barrier to admission of southern and eastern Europeans and some other groups until December 1, 1965, when an act of Congress began to eliminate over a five-year period nations of origin as a selective-entry basis.[17]

Public schools taught the children of these immigrants, but also created divisiveness between parents and their offspring. The children learned that the culture of their homes was not acceptable to native-born Americans. There was often much insecurity and some generational conflict.[18] But second and third, (sometimes fourth) generations of these immigrant families have by this time become well-schooled and most have transcended their feelings of marginality which were in part induced by in-school experiences. Most of them have been able to enter the economic, social and political mainstream of American life.

In the 1930s the role of the school was conceived by Progressive Education and its adherents to be that of

relating teaching to life in the society, helping students solve the daily problems which occur in a rapidly changing society, and simultaneously helping students understand the ongoing, persistent aspects of those situations which recur throughout life. The social function of schooling was increasingly stressed by John Dewey and his followers, who also advocated the problem-solving method as that most appropriate to teaching as well as to learning. Dewey and his followers felt it an appropriate role of the school to give the young a technique, a method, which would enable them to control their own destinies instead of being robots in the technological, corporate society. In the 1940s a "life-adjustment" philosophy pervaded many public high schools.

World War II intervened, and at its end there was much vociferous indictment of mass public schooling. Arthur Bestor, Admiral Rickover, and others attacked public schools for "soft pedagogy" and misplaced emphases. The schools were blamed for ignoring the demands of an expanding industrial economy, for neglecting science and mathematics instruction, and for failing in their duty to inculcate patriotism and a strong loyalty to flag and country. It was alleged that rigorous instructional standards had fallen by the wayside, and that the affective dimension had been favored over the cognitive. Criticisms of public schools continued through the 1960s.

In the decades of the 1960s and 1970s the public schools have come increasingly under attack from diverse elements of the public--parents who are concerned that their offspring cannot read and write acceptably; employers who complain that employees lack both literacy and a sense of responsibility; colleges, who must provide secondary-school level remedial instruction before some students can reasonably be expected to succeed in higher education; taxpayers who feel sure they are not getting their money's worth as property taxes for school funding soar but measures of achievement decline. We will return to the current situation after a bit.

Let's return to historic role of public education, and consider the lot of Blacks particularly, and other minorities generally.

For Blacks and other minorities, educational ideals have not been applied throughout American history as with the dominant group. To illustrate this point, let us remember that while "compulsory attendance" was becoming policy for white children in schools, "compulsory ignorance" became entrenched for Black children as educational policy. In fact, the prevailing educational policy was one of exclusion for Blacks in the south until the end of the Civil War. In the north, most states followed practices of separatism in schools, including public schools, even though they were not required by law to do so.

"Ignorance was a primary instrument of enslavement".[19] It was in 1740 that South Carolina passed the first law forbidding anyone to teach Blacks, have them taught, or use their services in writing. Of course a few slaves learned to write and read through clandestine means, and/or the benevolence of their owners--Frederick Douglass is one example of such a person--but the overwhelming majority of slaves were forcibly kept unlettered.

The ratio of slaves to free Blacks in the south was about 9:1. Therefore even if every free Black had been educated the impact on the Black population would have been minor. Statistics show that in 1850 43% of the free Black adults in North Carolina were literate, but only 20% were literate in Virginia. You can be sure that in the deep south literacy rates were much lower than Virginia's 20%. Those free Blacks who received some education in the south gained it from (1) secret and other private schools, (2) sabbath schools, (3) apprenticeship, (4) public schools, and (5) special treaty requirements.[20] Regulation of their education came from laws and public administrative actions. Blacks were for the most part excluded from what public schools existed, even though they often paid school taxes. Free Blacks in Virginia, facing repressive laws against the education of their children, sent them out of state to school, especially to Michigan. Virginia's legislature retaliated

by passing a law preventing the return to Virginia of those "who had left the state for schooling."[21] Carter G. Woodson pointed out that by 1860 only 10 per cent of adult Negroes in the south had the rudiments of education, a proportion much less than it had been in 1825.[22]

Turning to free Blacks in the north prior to the Civil War we find that systematic and widespread schooling was not made available to Blacks. In the beginning free public schools had a stigma attached to them because they were regarded as a system to educate paupers, so Blacks were advised to stay away from public schools lest they be regarded as becoming public charges. However, as this stigma of charity was removed from public schools, Blacks persistently struggled to be included and to have their children educated at public expense. Carter G. Woodson details these struggles state-by-state in his Chapter XIII, "Education at Public Expense," in Education of the Negro Prior to 1861.[23] In Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois Blacks pressed public officials to admit their children to public schools.

Blacks also used their own hard-earned small sums and established some private schools for their children.[24] These schools sometimes were aided by white abolitionists. They were marvelous examples of self-help by highly motivated

Blacks, but the schools usually offered minimal programs because their resources were so limited. White mobs sometimes burned these schools built by Blacks, but Blacks usually continued instruction of their young in some other school they would build, or in church buildings.

Spokesmen and reformers for public education for whites failed to exhibit equal concern for Black education. The noted Horace Mann, for example, was opposed to slavery but felt that as an educator he could not speak out against it.[25] In 1851 he wrote "approvingly" that the universal opinion was that Blacks were inferior to whites in intellect, but superior in sentiment and affection. Mann advocated the voluntary repatriation of free Blacks to Africa, feeling that Africa was their place where God had adapted the climate for their organization. Few whites challenged Mann's statements. One who did was Wendell Phillips in the pages of the Liberator.[26]

The infamous Dred Scott decision of 1857 epitomized public opinion and public policy of that time -- "Blacks had no rights which whites were bound to respect." By the time of the Civil War, 1861-1864, generations of Blacks had been denied schooling by the dominant society, north and south. But Blacks continued to strive for the right to learn and to be taught in formal, organized systematized settings. The irony of this whole period is that if Blacks had been

incapable of learning, as was the general claim, there would have been no need to deny them schooling. Thus, as Meyer Weinberg points out, the desperate attempts of whites to deny Blacks schooling meant that whites feared not that Blacks could not learn, but that they would.[27]

After the Civil War the school problem in the south was one of staggering proportions: of 4,100,000 former slaves some 1,700,000 were of school age.[28] There was no system of public schools in existence for them, or for poor whites. The white planter class had successfully kept all people below their class station in degrees of ignorance. To tackle problems faced by the newly freed slaves the Freedmen's Bureau was created on March 3, 1865. It did an outstanding job during its existance (March 3, 1865 to June 30, 1872), especially in education. When the Bureau was abolished it was operating "2677 day and night schools with 3300 teachers (most of whom it had trained) and 149,581 pupils".[29] It had established a system of professional, teacher-training, and industrial training for Blacks, and established such schools as Howard and Fisk Universities, Hampton Institute and St. Augustine Normal School. Also during this period, there was benevolent assistance from philanthropic groups and individuals in the north for the education of Blacks.

But it was clear that the educational future of Blacks turned on the creation of public schools. Under Congressional reconstruction Blacks secured fundamental citizenship rights under the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments. By 1870 every southern state had created a public school system, and by 1880 one-third of all Black children in the U.S. were in public schools.[30] In general, however, there was much inequality in public revenues spent on the schooling of Blacks as compared with whites in the south and in the border states. The irony of the situation is that, as DuBois documents in The Negro Common School (1901), Blacks were being denied their proportionate share of school funds (in terms of what they were paying into the system) but the common misperception was that Blacks were educated at the expense of whites. Nevertheless, inequities notwithstanding, by the last quarter of the 19th century the southern states had established a system of free public schools for all the children, Black and white.[31]

By the 1890s, relationships between Blacks and whites were shifting and rapidly deteriorating due to economic changes and political/legal compromises. A new system of discrimination began to emerge in the south with the institution of Black Codes, grandfather clauses, the sharecropper system, literacy tests, etc. Inequalities of all kinds -- funding, length of school term, facilities, supplies and

materials, teachers' salaries-- were codified into formal accepted educational policy under the Plessy v. Ferguson decision of 1896. Inequality, segregation, discrimination became the watchwords of southern public policy (most Blacks still lived in the south) from 1896-1954.

Henry Allen Bullock sums up the situation this way:

> Under the impact of new constitutional interpretations and limiting statutory laws, racial segregation became institutionalized and provided a special mold according to which education for Negroes was to be shaped for almost one hundred years. The biracial society in the south limited the education of Negroes to a special kind considered suitable for their status; it anchored the support of Negro schools more in the willingness of white citizens to provide for them than in the ability of states to support them; and, most important of all, it directed the development of Negro children out of the mainstream of American culture into the bayous. If there is any period that can be said to mark the beginning of what is commonly called Negro education, this is it.[32]

Booker T. Washington became the dominant spokesman for Negro education; his educational philosophy and practice consisted of stressing vocational/industrial education as that most appropriate for the Black condition at that point in time. He appealed to whites to use Black labor as the south's basic labor supply. Booker T. Washington recognized the need for a Black professional class, but he felt that those people would be dependent on the larger majority of Blacks within the segregated community.

The "battle" between Washington and W.E.B. DuBois, who preferred a more classical, liberal education for Blacks, is well-known. DuBois was active in liberal arts universities, and it was at Atlanta University in 1896 that he began the first effort to study scientifically the problems of the Negro in the United States, not the "Negro problem" as it had been commonly defined.

The following three tables will show inequalities in length of school term, per capita annual expenditures, and average monthly salaries of white and Black teachers during the period 1909-1929, in some southern states. In terms purely economic, the south could not afford two separate school systems. It was the poorest region of the country, lacked an industrial base, was faced with declining importance of its chief cash crop-cotton, had a thinly spread population, and a high ratio of children to adults. Blacks suffered thrice -- because they were Black, powerless, and their region was poor.

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The Failure of an Experiment

TABLE 2. Average length of term (school days) for white and Negro public schools in the Southern states, 1909–10 and 1928–29

States	1909–10		1928–29	
	White	Negro	White	Negro
Alabama	131	90	159	129
Arkansas	94	70	152	132
Florida	123	106	163	128
Georgia	158	126	158	137
Kentucky	123	115	160	140
Louisiana	156	93	174	112
Mississippi	123	101	141	130
North Carolina	105	94	151	137
South Carolina	125	74	173	114
Tennessee	121	89	166	156
Texas	139	135	152	147
Virginia	133	123	174	151
Average	128	101	164	144

Source: W. E. B. Du Bois, *Common Schools and the Negro American* (Atlanta, Ga.: Atlanta University Press, 1911); and E. B. Reuter, *The American Race Problem* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1938), p. 288.

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TABLE 4. Per capita annual expenditure (dollars) for the education of white and Negro children in the Southern states, 1914–15 and 1929–30

	1914–15		1929–30	
States	White	Negro	White	Negro
Alabama	9.00	1.47	37.50	7.16
Arkansas	8.15	3.74	26.91	17.06
Florida	15.10	2.37	78.25	10.57
Georgia	10.09	2.08	31.52	6.98
Kentucky	10.30	8.91	25.27	25.77
Louisiana	16.44	1.81	40.64	7.84
Mississippi	8.20	1.33	31.33	5.94
North Carolina	7.58	2.66	44.48	14.30
Oklahoma	14.33	11.16	40.48	20.83
South Carolina	10.70	1.09	52.89	5.20
Tennessee	8.70	4.58	46.52	31.54
Texas	10.89	7.50	46.71	39.66
Virginia	11.47	5.20	47.46	15.30
Average	10.82	4.01	42.39	15.86

Source: Monroe N. Work, *The Negro Year Book, 1916–17* (Tuskegee Institute, Ala.: The Negro Year Book Publishing Company, 1917), and *The Negro Year Book, 1931–32* (Tuskegee Institute, Ala.: The Negro Year Book Publishing Company, 1932).

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TABLE 5. Average monthly salary (dollars) of white and Negro public school teachers in some Southern states, 1909–10 and 1928–29

	1909–10		1928–29	
States	White	Negro	White	Negro
Alabama	53.76	24.47	117.18	54.46
Arkansas	40.52	30.36	96.40	69.08
Florida	61.97	31.98	190.12	66.85
Georgia	83.37	36.29	97.22	58.04
Louisiana	63.05	31.46	135.22	82.57
Mississippi	69.92	30.21	129.71	53.85
North Carolina	37.02	25.26	116.00	70.39
South Carolina	79.77	35.62	126.14	40.51
Tennessee	48.12	26.96	119.30	71.92
Texas	62.07	46.34	121.03	91.60
Virginia	47.18	29.37	111.36	69.72
Average	60.60	32.67	118.01	70.78

Source: W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Common School and the Negro American* Atlanta, Ga.: Atlanta University Press, 1911), pp. 107–115; Monroe N. Work, *The Negro Year Book, 1916–17* (Tuskegee Institute, Ala.: The Negro Year Book Publishing Company, 1917), and *The Negro Year Book, 1931–32* (Tuskegee Institute, Ala.: The Negro Year Book Publishing Company, 1932).

David Tyack reports that "in 1931 in the south as a whole the average figures spent on white students in the public schools were $45.63 in comparison with $14.95 for the Negro."[36] There was no equality under the "separate but equal" mandate of the Supreme Court, and no enforcement attempted.

With such glaring inequalities readily apparent, it is ironic that John Dewey, the foremost educational philosopher of the period, who focused on democracy and education, did not address himself to the question of Blacks, democracy, and education. In fact, when one examines in the larger American society the period from 1889-1942 it is clear that there was in general growing societal concern for children and youth, an expansion of the educational enterprise at all levels, but particularly at the secondary level, and the development of a science of education via the Herbartian movement, the Child-Study movement, experimental psychology, the measurement movement, the school survey movement, and pragmatic-progressive educational theory. These efforts affected public education positively for whites, but not for Blacks or other minorities of color. While Black educators studied and accepted the principles espoused by John Dewey, and educational practices developed by William H. Kilpatrick, Boyd H. Bode, and others -- neither those outstanding educational leaders nor public education policy operated positively for Blacks and other

minorities of color. It was the N.A.A.C.P.'s legal battles, and state/local efforts on the part of individual Black teachers and principals in conjunction with parents and community organizations which began to attack the unequal, discriminatory educational provisions operative for the Black population.

The irony of the situation, though, was that many excellent Black minds were channeled into teaching. The intent of segregation was to keep Blacks in a social position of inferiority. But the effect of channeling many excellent people into city schools for Blacks was to develop a cadre of dedicated, intelligent people who maximized opportunity within the segregated system. Black adults used teaching as a primary means of employment for the professional group in the south and in border states. Ironically also, these teachers and schools were not so much regulated and supervised on a daily basis as long as no disturbances were created, so teachers and principals were free to teach their students the truth about Negro History, to encourage them as people, to goad and cajole them, when necessary, to study and achieve. Further, the obvious lack of employment opportunity in the southern states for those who lacked education and/or skills motivated somewhat recalcitrant learners to exert themselves lest they fall by default into some undesirable work. By the 1920s a number of excellent all-Black high schools had developed despite the system of segregation

and inequality, and they continued to operate effectively until the mid-1950s. Notable among these schools were Dunbar High School in Washington, D.C., Manassas High School in Memphis, Tenn., Gary Roosevelt in Indiana, DuSable of Chicago, Dunbar and Jones High Schools in Greater Little Rock, Arkansas, Douglas of Oklahoma City, Manual Training in Muscogee, Oklahoma, Lincoln and Sumner in the Greater Kansas City area, and Parker of Birmingham, Alabama.[37]

Black teachers and the principal at Dunbar High School, Little Rock, Arkansas, early in the 1940s, sought court action to equalize the salaries of Black and white teachers in that city; they won the case. There were several such suits for equal salaries in Virginia in the late 1930s and early 1940s, beginning in Norfolk and spreading to other cities as Newport News, Danville, and Richmond. These cases exerted a progressive influence which went far beyond the specific communities in which they arose.[38]

Numbers of Blacks migrated to the north, hoping for enlarged educational opportunity for their children and enlarged employment opportunity for themselves. But Black children in mixed northern schools often were separated in classrooms, and usually were segregated in or excluded from certain sports, as swimming, and such social activities

as the junior/senior prom. Black teachers and principals found only minimal employment opportunities in northern urban school systems. But Blacks never gave up hope. As DuBois said, "Probably never in the world have so many oppressed people tried in every possible way to educate themselves.[39] They fought against segregation, discrimination, inequality, suppression, and imtimidation to educate their children and themselves. They never gave up, and what progress occurred largely via public education at all levels as the primary means of preparation for entry into American occupations and adult citizenship responsibilities.

The 1954 Brown v. Topeka decision in education changed the basis for both public and educational policies for Blacks. The concept of "separate-but-equal" was overturned. The long, hard struggle in the society and in the courts (via the N.A.A.C.P.) leading up to Brown is beautifully told in the book, Simple Justice, by Richard Kluger. But the struggle for equality -- educational, and social -- was just beginning. DuBois, in 1955, detailed the educational dilemma now facing Blacks:

> The decision presents Negroes with a cruel dilemma. On the one hand, they want their children educated. That is a must, else they continue in semislavery.
>
> On the other hand, with successfully mixed schools they know what their children must suffer for years from southern white teachers,

> from white hoodlums who sit beside them and under school authorities from janitors to superintendents who hate and despise them. They know, dear God, how they know.
>
> He predicted that most of the best black teachers would lose their jobs because they will not and cannot teach what many white folks will want taught.[40]

His words were prophetic -- we have seen Black students suspended, and pushed out of school,[41] Black teachers and principals dismissed, demoted, and sidetracked into jobs with little meaning, and young prospective teachers not finding employment. We have lived through the massive resistance schemes of southern politicians, and white flight from desegregating school systems. In fact, it was not until the passage and enforcement of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that much public school desegregation occurred, under the threat of withholding federal funds from segregating systems.[42]

Black parents have kept on sending their children to public schools, and working to improve the quality of those schools through any means possible. In many cities and counties we have elected school board members in an effort to change policy decisions; we have demonstrated, boycotted, picketed, sat-in, and sought community control of public schools in our neighborhoods. We have permitted our children to be bussed, paired, and magnetized in an effort to gain for them equal educational opportunity. We have never given up

on public schools or the concept of schooling as a primary means of self-development, occupational opportunity, citizenship preparation, self-actualization, and upward mobility.

But northern-style de facto segregation continues, and has become a nation-wide phenomenon. It is enhanced now by the Dayton decision (1977) which has decreed that plaintiffs must prove segregative intent (not effect) in order to gain relief and justice for their offspring.

Influentials in the educational establishment continue to raise the age-old question: "Can Blacks Learn?" We have, for example, suffered through the 1966 Coleman report, its reassessments by Jencks, Moynihan, Mosteller, and others, and Coleman's more recent "Revisionist" statements, recanting his original beliefs. The "tradition" of Thomas Jefferson, Horace Mann and others thus continues to the present day, questioning the mental capabilities of the Black population, despite its achievements "in spite of the system."[43]

Public schools are under attack from friends and enemies alike, so the idea of the public school is being tested again just as it was tested in the 18th and 19th centuries as advocates fought to establish and spread the concept against opposition from significant portions of the American 'public'. Many proposals for "alternative" schools are really proposals to circumvent public schools. Voucher

proposals probably will undercut the financial base of organized, institutionalized, systematized public schooling, and must be resisted. "Career education" does not necessarily prepare one for a meaningful occupation which pays a living wage.

There is a growing body of neoconservative social science literature which says that schooling makes little or no difference in the lives of underprivileged individuals and/or minority groups, or that the rate of return from long years of schooling is increasingly low, and therefore not worth the price, or that the public schools have failed and therefore should be abolished.[44] This is essentially the cost-benefit business model applied to education. It suggests that sufficient "profits" have not been realized from school expenditures. It suggests also that because educators have failed to overcome the academic achievement problems of low-income minority children and youth, it would be well, as a matter of public policy, not to continue to allocate societal resources to Blacks or the poor.

But we must remember that the educational programs now under attack, such as Headstart, Follow-Through, Upward Bound, etc., got their start in 1965, only 14 years ago. They never were adequately supported since it turned out that we could not have "guns and butter" in equal amounts during the Vietnam War period. These programs and other

public policy efforts to assist Blacks came under attack as early as 1972, only 7 years after they were begun. Thus leading neoconservative intellectuals gave Blacks, other minorities, and the poor only 7 uneven years of governmental assistance to make up for generations of the most acute deprivation. In the 1960s and '70s permissiveness has pervaded both society and schools. "Do your own thing" has become the watchword of the day, along with the prescription "Look out for number one." Many of us believe societal permissiveness is illusion, and compensation for the increasing regulation and conservatism evident in institutional behaviors and public policies. This illusory permissiveness has not served Black youth well, as many of them feel free not to learn, if learning is "not their thing." Too many teachers feel free not to teach, and too many parents feel free not to be responsible for their issue.

Further, public schools have been required to add to their own primary functions those essential tasks no longer well done by the family, and societal charges no other institution will accept. Thus public schools today are asked to go far beyond their original intent -- to assume such roles as feeding children breakfast, finding them clothing and eyeglasses, and assuming the major responsibility for desegregation in a generally segregated society.

Given the history of Blacks in America, and their ongoing struggle to be educated against continuing formidable

odds, the wonder is that we have survived at all, and that any of us have succeeded against the odds. But we have, and we retain our belief in learning. We did not succumb to the policies of compulsory ignorance which really ended only in 1964 with the passage and enforcement of the Civil Rights Act. Today we must find new ways so that our youth do not succumb to the more subtle plans for "voluntary" ignorance -- plans which include permissiveness, availability of drugs, suspensions, pushouts, fads in educational "innovations," and general put-down of the worth of schooling.

To close, let us sum up what has been the <u>effect</u> of having public schooling so that masses of children have had some opportunity to learn and grow at public expense.

1. There is an "enlightened electorate" capable of voting and maintaining republican democracy.
2. Patriotism and loyalty to the nation still are inculcated via schooling, although probably not so intensely as in earlier centuries.
3. Immigrants and their children from foreign countries have been, and continue to be (Cubans; Vietnamese), schooled in public institutions in language, norms and values, and cognitive information, in order to be successful, mobile, and happy in this nation.
4. The needs of employers for competent workers have been met via public schooling.

5. Our labor force has become the most schooled labor force in the modern world.
6. Literacy is almost universal.
7. Educational attainment rates continue to climb.
8. Many youth from underprivileged families have been able to move into successful and satisfying economic and social positions.
9. People have learned <u>how</u> to question "the system," <u>what</u> to question about "the system", and methods of changing the system to cause it to operate in less oppressive ways.
10. Public schools provide a major employment market, and another market for goods and services -- books, supplies, furniture, equipment, repairmen, etc.
11. Public schools have educated people to rise to positions where they are earners capable of purchasing goods and services to keep a productive, capitalistic economy operative.
12. Public schools have made self-actualization possible for large numbers of individuals throughout our history.

We may conclude that even if religious, business, economic, social class, political, and racial <u>intents</u> often have been primary in the minds of American influentials and policy-makers, and education secondary, the <u>effect</u> of education via public schooling has been to make a very

meaningful, identifiable, verifiable difference in the lives of a great many American individuals.

If we accept Daniel Bell's idea that since 1945 a post-industrial society has emerged in Western countries, it follows that

> . . . the structural aspects of post-industrialism -- and the transformation of the occupational structure of the society -- derive from techno-scientific changes in the organization of the economy: the strategic centrality of information and knowledge, the new innovative roles of theoretical knowledge for research and development as well as policy, the growing importance of the science-based industries in the last half of the twentieth century (e.g., electronics, computers, optics, polymers), and the rise of "intellectual technology" as the main feature of these developments, as machine technology was to industrial society in the past.
>
> The socioeconomic changes can be illustrated by a few brief indicators: (a) a shift from a goods-producing to a service economy in the distribution of employment, (b) a white-collar and professional-technical occupational force, (c) the rise of an "information" economy (d) the expansion of the nonprofit sector.[45]

If we accept the idea that the United States is now enmeshed in a post-industrial society, with most traditional frontiers conquered, we know that our system

> is organized around information and utilization of information in complex systems, and the use of that information as a way of guiding society. It is a society uniquely dependent on the codification of theoretical knowledge. In effect, this means that those institutions primarily concerned with the codification of theoretical knowledge became primary to society, because theory is the way to practice.

> (Since) a postindustrial society requires knowledge, skills, and theory, formal education can become strategic. . . .[46]

There will be no place for ignorance, or even innocence, in the world which is unfolding before our eyes. In order that all citizens may be able to participate effectively and live out their lives meaningfully in this postindustrial society, a rededication to public education, teaching, learning is necessary, along with a collective renewal of societal responsibility for insuring that every child gets an equal chance to be schooled equally from public resources.

FOOTNOTES

1. The reader who wants more detail on specific aspects of this topic will find useful a special issue of the Harvard Educational Review entitled "Education and History," v. 46, no. 3, August 1976. Particularly appropriate are the articles of Sol Cohen, Richard J. Storr, David B. Tyack, and Carl F. Kaestle.

2. Representative of the type are such works as R. Freeman Butts and Lawrence A. Cremin, A History of Education in American Culture (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1953.) Chapters 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, 12, 15, 16 portray educational viewpoints and actual practices in education in four periods -- 1600-1779, 1779-1865, 1865-1918, and 1918-Mid-Century. See also Merle Curti, The Social Ideas of American Educators, new, rev. ed. (Paterson, N. J.: Littlefield, Adams & Co., 1959; and Lawrence A. Cremin, The Transformation of the School (New York: Knopf, 1961.)

3. Representative of revisionist thought are such works as Clarence J. Karier, Paul Violas, Joel Spring, Roots of Crisis: American Education in the Twentieth Century (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1973); Clarence J. Karier, ed., Shaping the American Educational State: 1900 to the Present (New York: Free Press, 1975.); Michael B. Katz, Class, Bureaucracy, and Schools: The Illusion of Change in America (New York: Praeger, 1971); Colin Greer, The Great School Legend: A Revisionist Interpretation of American Public Education (New York: Viking Press, 1972.)

4. See Sol Cohen, "The History of the History of American Education, 1900-1976: The Uses of the Past," in Harvard Educational Review, v. 46, no. 3, Aug., 1976, pp. 298-330.

5. Ibid.

6. David B. Tyack, The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1974), p. 12.

7. Sol Cohen, op. cit., p. 329.

8. R. Freeman Butts and Lawrence A. Cremin, A History of Education in American Culture (New York: Holt, 1953), p. 102. See all of chapters 3 and 4 for detailed information.

9. Merle Curti, The Social Ideas of American Educators, new, revised ed. (Paterson, N. J.: Littlefield, Adams & Co., 1959), p. 21. See also Richard Pratte, The Public School Movement: A Critical Study (New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1973), chapter two.

10. Butts and Cremin, op. cit., pp. 193-194.

11. Ibid., pp. 190-196.

12. David B. Tyack, ed., Turning Points in American Educational History (Waltham, Mass.: Blaisdell Pub. Co., 1967), pp. 120-121; 124.

13. Butts and Cremin, op. cit., pp. 121-127; 196-202; Tyack, op. cit., pp. 352-354.

14. Tyack, op. cit., p. 354.

15. Butts and Cremin, op. cit., pp. 418-419.

16. Richard Pratte, The Public School Movement: A Critical Study (New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1973) pp. 55-57.

17. See Tyack, op. cit., pp. 228-234. Also useful is Charles F. Marden and Gladys Meyer, Minorities in American Society, fifth ed. (New York: Van Nostrand, 1978), chapter 4. A number of detailed accounts exist, as for example, Clarence J. Karier, ed., Shaping the American Educational State: 1900 to the Present (New York: The Free Press, 1975), chapters 6, 8, 9.

18. Oscar Handlin, The Uprooted (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1951), chapter 8.

19. Meyer Weinberg, A Chance to Learn: A History of Race and Education in the United States (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 11.

20. Ibid., p. 15.

21. Ibid., p. 18.

22. Carter G. Woodson, The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861 (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1968), p. 228.

23. Ibid., pp. 307-335.

24. Ibid., chapter VI, "Educating the Urban Negro," pp. 122-150.

25. Merle Curti, op. cit., pp. 130-131; 138.

26. Meyer Weinberg, op. cit., p. 31. Weinberg's sources as documented in his footnotes are issues of the Liberator, May 14, 1852; October 22, 1352; March 25, April 8, April 15, April 29, May 6, May 13, and May 20, 1853; December 24, 1847; February 11, 1848.

27. Ibid., p. 39.

28. Carey McWilliams, Brothers Under the Skin, rev. ed. (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1964), p. 257. See also Henry Allen Bullock, A History of Negro Education in the South: From 1619 to the Present (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1967), pp. 22-29.

29. Ibid.

30. Meyer Weinberg, op. cit., p. 46.

31. Henry Allen Bullock, op. cit., p. 58.

32. Ibid., p. 74.

33. Ibid., p. 177.

34. Ibid., p. 180.

35. Ibid., p. 181.

36. David B. Tyack, op. cit., p. 269.

37. Edgar A. Epps (ed.), Black Students in White Schools (Worthington, Ohio: Charles A. Jones Pub. Co., 1972), p. 4.

38. Faustine C. Jones, "Black Americans and the City: A Historical Survey," The Journal of Negro Education, XLII, no. 3., summer 1973, p. 277. For a full account of suits by Black teachers see Doxey A. Wilkerson, "The Negro School Movement in Virginia: From 'Equalization' to 'Integration," in August Meier and Elliott Rudwick (eds.), The Making of Black America, 2 v. in 1 (New York: Atheneum, 1969), pp. 261-263.

39. W. E. B. DuBois, "The United States and the Negro," Freedomways (1971), p. 16.

40. Meyer Weinberg, op. cit., p. 87. Weinberg's source is: W. E. B. DuBois, "Two Hundred Years of Segregated Schools," in Philip S. Foner (ed.), W. E. B. DuBois Speaks: Speeches and Addresses, 1920-1963 (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970), p. 283.

41. Nancy L. Arnez, "Implementation of Desegregation as a Discriminatory Process," The Journal of Negro Education, XLVII, No. 1, Winter, 1978, pp. 28-45.

42. The entire Winter 1978 of The Journal of Negro Education is built around a candid discussion of desegregation; the reader is referred to this source for commentary on the subject. Also useful is the article by Charles S. Bullock III, "Federal Law and School Discrimination in the North," in The Journal of Negro Education, XLVII, No. 2, Spring, 1978, pp. 113-131.

43. This phrase is borrowed from Bernard C. Watson's book of that title. See his accounts of three public school administrators who made an educational difference in In Spite of the System (Cambridge, Mass., Ballinger Publications, 1974.)

    Views of Thomas Jefferson on the education of Blacks may be found in Carter G. Woodson, op. cit., p. 60-63; 66; 79-80; 91; 384-386.

44. For a full statement of the author's views see her work, The Changing Mood in America: Eroding Commitment? (Washington, D. C.: Howard University Press, 1977). Chapters 2 and 5 are particularly appropriate to this point.

45. Daniel Bell, "The New Class: A Muddled Concept," in Society, Volume Sixteen, Number Two, January/February 1979, pp. 17-18. For a full treatment of his ideas on the post-industrial society see his book, The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1973.)

46. Richard Pratte, op. cit., p. 219.

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3. West, Earle H. The Black American and Education. (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Pub. Co., 1972.)